

## **Update to LHS SEN information report in light of COVID-19, school closures and SEND provision**

**Who can I contact if I have any questions:**

Mrs D Jefferies – SENCO

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As a school we are fully aware of the difficulties that the COVID 19 virus has brought to our young people and their families. We would like to reassure all families of students who have Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities that we are continuing to provide support during this difficult time. We will continue to work together with you to support your child.

*The Government have passed the Coronavirus Act 2020 which gives temporary emergency powers to the Government to issue a notice (a month at a time) that would modify the legal requirements on Local Authorities in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans. If this notice is issued it would be in relation to two key areas:*

***The absolute duty to make the provision in an EHC plan (section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014) is to be temporarily amended to a 'reasonable endeavours' duty. This means that during the specified period the LA needs to do whatever it reasonably can to put provision in place, but if they cannot do so they would not necessarily be breaching the law.***

***Disapplying the duty to undertake annual reviews of EHC plans.***

*Again, if there could be a risk to the child or young person's health, wellbeing or safety if they do not receive a particular provision or intervention, raise this with your school and Local Authority without delay.*

The situation in which we find ourselves is unique. The information below is a summary and incorporates all the key documentation released by the Department for Education during the Covid 19 pandemic.

**What are the entitlements of children and young people with SEND when schools are closed due to Coronavirus?**

All schools have been ordered to effectively close, retaining a skeleton staff to provide education for the children of key workers, and 'vulnerable children.'

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHC plan) and those who have been assessed by education providers or local authorities. The majority of children with SEN, who receive SEN Support at school but do not have an EHC plan, would be expected to stay home unless they have a social worker or a parent/carer who is a key worker.

### **Risk assessments:**

Schools need to do a risk assessment for each child which takes into account the views of parents and carers. This will inform the decision about whether they should continue in school or college, or whether their needs can be met at home safely. The initial risk assessment was carried out via the phone call that we made to you when school closed. The risk assessments are reviewed with you during the phone contact that we make weekly.

### **My child has an EHC Plan, do I have to send my child in to school?**

If your child is assessed by medical professionals as clinically extremely vulnerable (you will have received a letter from your GP/hospital if this is the case), then she should not attend school.

If someone in your household is clinically extremely vulnerable, then your child may attend school but must only do so if stringent social distancing measures are followed.

If your child has a medical condition which makes her clinically vulnerable, then you should follow medical advice.

If your child or any members of the household are experiencing any symptoms of the coronavirus, she and other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days.

For vulnerable children who have an EHC Plan guidance states that attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment that their needs can be met safely or more safely at school. If, as result of the risk assessment and risk assessment reviews, it is felt that it would be too high risk to send your child to school there is no requirement to do so and your child can access her learning remotely with resources provided for her.

In our ongoing contact with you during this period we will together, review the situation for child, so that we can work together to best support your child.

## **If my child is still attending school, how will my child's learning be supported at school?**

During this period school will not be providing the full breadth of the national curriculum, they will be providing care for students and incorporating education provision and a range of activities, to support academic progress and wellbeing, but this will not be fully in line with their EHC Plan provision.

## **How long are schools likely to be closed?**

Schools continue to be open for vulnerable children and children of key workers. We will be in contact with parents/carers when we receive additional guidance about a wider opening of schools.

## **If my child has an EHC plan, does the local authority and school have a legal duty to deliver provision?**

From a legal perspective this remains the case. However, given the likely significant disruption to staffing, it may be difficult for school or local authorities to deliver the exact provision in the EHC plan, particularly over the next few weeks.

The school will make 'reasonable endeavours' to fulfil their duty. This means that we will do whatever we reasonably can to put provision in place, but if we cannot do so we would not necessarily be breaching the law.

To support your child, we will:

- Make 3x weekly welfare phone calls to speak to you and your child
- Provide a personalised work pack for your child, tailored to her needs as laid out in her EHCP
- Provide remote support for learning via weekly phone calls and work set on FROG
- Contact your child via email from her Learning Coach
- Carry out the Annual Review remotely and ensure that we gather parent/carer reviews
- Conduct doorstep visits as and when required
- Continue to liaise with external agencies to support your child (Educational Psychology/CAMHS and health professionals)
- Review the risk assessment with you every two weeks
- Keep you informed of any updates in terms of school re-opening and support your child with transition back to school

### **What do I do if I feel there is a particular provision that my child needs?**

Please speak to Mrs Jefferies (SENCO). Mrs Jefferies and the Inclusion Team will be making calls to all EHCP students three times a week — please raise any issues at all. You can also contact the Local Authority who can advise.

### **What will happen about my child's Annual Review?**

We will continue to hold Annual Reviews wherever possible. This will of course need to be carried out remotely. We will speak to you in advance and arrange a date to make sure that you are happy with the process. Parents and students will remain at the heart of the process and your voices are the most important. We have already carried out successful Annual Reviews via telephone conference calls

If you feel there is an urgent need to change school provision, please let us know as soon as possible and we will liaise with the Local Authority about this to see what review mechanisms could be put in place.

### **How can I support my child's learning at home?**

It is important to try and set a routine for your child. Your child will have been set work via FROG which she can access. We have also delivered a personalised work pack for all EHCP students, so that they can access the work at their level and continue to learn and make progress.

In our weekly phone calls home, we will talk to your child about her work and offer and help with any issues. We will also encourage your child to read and try and spend some time relaxing and doing things that she enjoys. This will help to promote positive mental health during this difficult time.

### **How can I help my child cope with the changes?**

We understand that this is a significant change for many families. Please give yourself time to adjust to a new routine. Maintaining positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for child and your family is very important.

One Education have provided a useful helpline number for parents:

Educational Psychology Helpline 0161 276 0118

The Local Authority have also provided some supporting links through the local offer:

<https://www.manchester.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer>

### **What plans will be made for re-integration and transition to new classes/schools/post 16?**

We know that any transitions, especially for many of our children with SEN, can be stressful and need to be well planned, in advance, and should not be introduced abruptly. We understand that re-integration back into school and/or transition to a new class or school is going to be made even more challenging following the current situation.

As such our aim is to plan carefully for transition and reintegration and work closely with you as parents/carers to help prepare your child/children and guide them through these transitions carefully. We are liaising with primary schools and post 16 education providers to support transition.

Year 6 Transition – if your child starts with us in Year 7, we are in the process of contacting SENCOs at primary school to gather all relevant information to support your child. We will be arranging virtual meetings in Half Term 6 to support transition.